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Japan

Agricultural Situation

This Week in Japan

2001

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Report Highlights:

FAS/GIPSA Team Visit Japan to Discuss StarLink Testing; APA Participation in JAS Revision Committee Results in Adoption of U.S. Proposals; Wine Institute's Seminar Presents Complementary Marketing Opportunities; U.S. Rice/Corn Market Share Slightly Down in 2000; FAS/Japan Chairs APEC Meeting.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo [JA1], JA



This Week in Japan

An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market

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- i FAS/GIPSA Team Visit Japan to Discuss StarLink Testing:** On March 15, the FAS Chief Science Advisor and GIPSA International Monitoring Staff Director met with Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) officials to discuss U.S. testing of corn for the presence of StarLink. MHLW said they were pleased with improvements made in the U.S.-Japan StarLink pre-export testing protocol, but insisted a certain percentage of corn must be tested in Japan to comply with its mandatory safety assessment for GM varieties, which takes effect April 1. MHLW mentioned that Hawaiian papayas and U.S. sweet corn will also be tested for unapproved varieties. In response to concerns that testing in Japan will disrupt trade, MHLW pledged to consider proposals to implement monitoring in ways that are least trade-disruptive. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i APA Participation in JAS Revision Committee Results in Adoption of U.S. Proposals:** The APA - The Engineered Wood Association's participation in the Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS) Revision Committee on oriented strand board (OSB) and laminated lumber resulted in the adoption of key U.S. proposals. In the November, 2000, JAS Technical Committee meeting, the Foreign agricultural Service, in conjunction with U.S., industry, proposed that the strength axis of panels be market driven, that the OSB delamination test be rationalized, and that thickness tolerances be liberalized. APA was appointed membership on the JAS Revision Committee in December, 2000, and in February, the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries adopted the U.S.' trade liberalizing proposals. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Wine Institute's Seminar Presents Complementary Marketing Opportunities:** The Wine Institute held a seminar and tasting of American wines for 125 Kansai-area restaurants that are participating in the Wine Institute's "Wine By-the-glass" promotion. ATO Osaka Marketing Specialist Harima attended the seminar to meet with the importers of American wines, participating restaurant industry representatives, and a magazine publisher who co-organized the promotion. By supporting the Wine Institute's Kansai promotions, ATO/Osaka is also able to introduce American cuisine promotional ideas to the participating restaurants. This synergism helps boost favorable results from our respective marketing activities such as overcoming the lack of awareness of American food ingredients which leads to greater overall sales. (ATO Osaka)
- i U.S. Rice/Corn Market Share Slightly Down in 2000:** The Food Agency concluded rice tenders for the final year of the Uruguay Round minimum access agreement in JFY2000. U.S. market share slightly declined from 47.9 percent in JFY1999 to 47.7 percent in JFY2000. Due to Japan's detection of StarLink in corn for food last fall, imports of U.S. corn between November 2000 and January 2001 declined almost 11 percent, and are forecast down about 8 percent for MY2001 (October 2000 - September 2001). Bilateral negotiations between Japan and the U.S. continue aimed to minimize trade disruptions from StarLink issues. See FAS/Tokyo's report, JA1026, for details. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i FAS/Japan Chairs APEC Meeting:** On March 8, post chaired the APEC/Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group's session entitled "Loss of Food from Production to Consumption and Issues Related to Distribution". The objective, among the participants from Pacific region economies, was an information exchange on how to reduce food waste along the production, processing, distribution, consumption chain. Strategies discussed included greater use of technology and investment to reduce post-harvest loss, strengthened agricultural cooperative efforts, and focused government policies to stabilize the farm sector. FAS is now completing a country report for use by the APEC working group. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

Upcoming events: Mar 21-23 Codex Biotech Subcommittee/US-Japan Bilateral; Mar 26 USGC/AgOffice Discuss Starlink; Apr 8-13 Hog/Pork Study in Asia by Yoonhee Macke, DLP/CMP/FAS/USDA; May 7 Hop Trade Delegation; May 14-18 On-site review of USMEF/Tokyo by the Compliance Review Staff.